

West Wind

The Newsletter of the NZ Zephyr Owners' Association

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ZEPHYR NATIONALS 2003

As good as it gets?

This year's National Champs in Christchurch offered the prospect of being something a little bit different. The choice of a combined venue – Sumner Bay and the Estuary - promised varied sailing conditions and the potential for problems if all did not go to plan. For those that do not know it, Sumner Bay is an open water location off Sumner Beach. The approach to the access ramp can be through the surf in certain tide and wind states, making for difficult launching and retrieving. In the end, the weather co-operated reasonably and it all worked out well.

Briefing was held on Friday evening over a meal in Christchurch Yacht Club with a planned start in Sumner Bay at 1000 hrs the next day. Race Officer Bryce Hawkins elected to stick with this plan despite a forecast 30 knot South Wester. The SW duly eventuated on race day, but not at the forecast strength. The launching decision was postponed until 0900 hrs, but once taken, the fleet headed out into a 10-15 knot breeze from the S-SW. The course was set close to shore, with a course heading such that those starting at the starboard end of a very long start line were just about on the lay line! Fortunately, Don Le Page commented loudly to the Committee Boat that he could lay the course heading, alerting many skippers to the orientation of the course. Conditions were a steady 10-18 knots for most of the race, but there were a large number of retirements. This, plus a communication from Lyttelton Harbour that they were experiencing 30 knots, prompted the Race Officer to abandon racing for the day. Needless to say, the forecast conditions again did not eventuate so we ended up forfeiting very manageable sailing conditions.

The following day saw four races scheduled and the return of the N/NE sea breeze, which built steadily during the day. The first race saw about 5-8 knots of breeze, with an awkward sea state that made maintaining boat speed a challenge for all. Those at the front of the fleet seemed to have an extra ounce of speed! More wind throughout the day made life easier for all and the fourth race saw a very pleasant 12 or so knots.

On day three the event moved to the Estuary and again moderate N/NE breezes were the order of the day, with peak wind strength in the 12-15 knot range. The course was shorter, with a tidal, land locked course to contend with. Generally the causeway side of the Estuary course is favoured with less tide and a slightly different wind direction close to shore. This really was not much in evidence, making for a fair first leg. A shorter start line than the previous days and a forty boat fleet meant that a good start made life easier. Two races were completed without drama on an Olympic style course modified to accommodate a mud-bank on the first reach!

The final day of the event saw a more moderate version of the N/NE breeze of the previous day allowing the event to conclude pretty much on schedule. The first race was shortened, then a puzzling 25 minute delay ensued before the start of the final race completed in similar conditions.

Race Officer Bryce Hawkins ran a generally well organised

event, though some of his decisions could perhaps have been different. The long intervals between races, both on Sumner Bay and the Estuary were a bit puzzling. All in all though, it was a contest that allowed all contestants to compete. The social programme was well run with the New Year's Eve prize giving going off well.

Glen McKenzie (#309, *Pilatus*) once again dominated the event, to the degree that he was often handily ahead at the top mark. Matthew Hannah in sister ship (#308, *Titan*) sailed a similarly consistent second ahead of Don Le Page (#256, *FrontRunner*) who really wasn't his usual consistent self. The remaining top order places were keenly contested by Richard Ineson, (#254, *Wave Dancer*) Bill Beere, (#64, *Echo*) Colin Maddren (#253, *Ebbtide Express*) with Rob Ebert (#304, *Hustle*) bringing up the best of the rest.

As we have observed on these pages before, a National event throws up all manner of incidents that are rewarded with a variety of citations. Local restaurateurs Gilly and Harry provided on-the-water lunches out in Sumner Bay and were cited for **Promoting Bad Nutritional Habits**. Very tasty lunches were delivered in a plastic box containing a glad wrapped roll and a couple of loose biscuits but the biscuits threatened to head for the bilges while the filled roll was extricated from its glad wrap. The only way to be sure of being able to eat all your lunch was to eat the biscuit and cake before the roll!

There were a number of **Unauthorised Discharges of Noxious Material** in Sumner Bay as you might imagine with a 40 strong fleet out there all day. Race Officer Bryce Hawkins started it all by depositing his breakfast in Sumner Bay before Race 1. Racing was cancelled after one race, but Bryce was at pains to reassure us that the cancellation was for bad weather, not bad digestion!

There was one particularly reprehensible instance of **Mistreating a Family Heirloom**. The Maynard name was synonymous with Zephyr sailing in the 70s and 80s and Ken has been an occasional sailor since then. Grandson James resurrected the family Zephyr (#121, *Runaway*) and was doing well in Race 6. However he gybed and capsized at the wing mark so he elected to have some gybing practice before the next race. Unfortunately he broke his boom and had to retire. The following morning he had a further mishap and ended up borrowing an aluminium mast from Sandy Hines, foreshortening her cameo appearance.

I am pretty much a social sailor these days and no longer see myself as a threat to those at the top of the fleet. I was pleased to be tailing Richard Ineson into the wing mark in one of the Estuary races. Richard was clear ahead of me and I expected him to gybe and be gone, but he executed an awful gybe and stopped dead in the water, so that I was unable to avoid contact with him. I elected to do a 720, but this was clearly the yachting equivalent of a **Professional Foul!** Actually, I am not sure if a 720 was necessary as I did not have an opportunity to keep clear. The ground I lost from the 720 eventually cost me a couple of places. I knew I was still a significant competitive threat to be taken out like that!

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The **Showboating Award** clearly went to Shane Foster (#95, *Alaurial*) who capsized and swamped off the club house in the strong ebb tide when returning after race 7. He needed the assistance of two rescue boats to restore him to shore.

The **Hard Luck** award belonged to Jeremy Heathfield (#212, *Lush*). Jeremy had a mixed day on the water and came ashore to find that his car had been broken into and his cell phone stolen.

We appreciated the effort Colin Maddren and Bob Still (#24, *Yankee*) put in to travel south in support of the Nationals, so it seems unfair to nominate Bob for the **Jaffa Award**. However, after one particular Estuary race he was most unhappy with the amount of water available for his Auckland length rudder and centreboard and was overheard vehemently declaring the Estuary a most unsuitable venue for a National Championship! We know all this is because his cell phone rang while he was changing and the person on the other end had asked how his day had been!

Don Le Page always merits a **Hard Luck** citation usually because he suffers some sort of gear failure. This time Don had the dubious distinction of being the only OCS of the entire event. At the start of Race 7 Tony Park had arranged for a clump of four Zephyrs to be right in the path of Don's perfect final approach to line. Don reportedly crash tacked to avoid them, is rumoured to have capsized and was declared OCS!

The Inventors Award has to go to Andy Holland (#71, *Irritate*). Andy is always thinking about things and his latest area of interest is self bailers. He has invented a new "Super Suck" venturi which he was more than willing to demonstrate to fellow competitors in the rigging area, presumably with an eye to future commercial opportunities. His new venturi was so effective that when it was operating at peak capacity he was reluctant to stand on that side of the boat. Unfortunately, Andy's boat began to fill with water shortly after he rounded the top mark in third place. He fell back through the fleet and returned to shore after the race to investigate his new wonder, fully expecting it to be clogged with weed, but in fact the whole invention had dropped off his boat. Duct tape saved the day! All this happened on his birthday, reportedly his 25th.

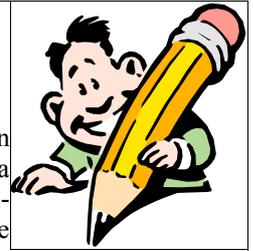
Comeback King Jim Park made a long awaited return to class sailing. His pre-contest warm up comprised re-learning which way round to have the centreboard and rudder blades!

All in all a fun event. Congratulations to Glen McKenzie for successfully reclaiming his title from Don Le Page, and thanks to all those that organised and supported the event.

Rob Ebert

**FROM THE PEN OF
ALEX AITKEN**

National President



Welcome to all fellow sailors who have chosen for whatever reason to be proud owners of a Zephyr. The last bulletin of ZOA news was incorporated in with "Estuary Capers" and some northerners were somewhat taken back by the free licence of the editors. I mentioned this to a well attended and boisterous meeting of CZOA and proceeded to slap their hands with wet bus ticket. The comments and finger gestures are unprintable. The fact that I was NZ President counted for stuff all!

I had an email from Rob Ebert in early February requesting copy for West Wind but a number of business and family concerns put the exercise on the back burner.

It's been a busy time for the Zephyr fleets around the country and I had a comment from the Canterbury fleet that perhaps we need to look at more of an even spread of contests throughout the season. The programme this year seemed to "all go" through to the end of December culminating with a well organised national contest, then it seems to have gone flat. Apart from Hamilton with its lake, the rest of the national fleet is scattered in small pockets so a degree of planning is needed to optimise fleet numbers. One of the traps is to programme events one year and five years down the track using the same format, then wake up to small fleets through lack of interest. The social structure within New Zealand is changing due to economic and lifestyle pressures. We have to accept change in the way we communicate and how we provide support structures in order to enjoy competitive and recreational sailing. Rob sent me an e-mail the other day to remind me that we are all volunteers and there are only 24 hours in the day. Thank you Rob.

The trading side of the Zephyr Owners' Association has been keeping me busy with turnover in excess of \$22,000. As noted elsewhere, the trading section of ZOA has been very busy. Analysis of the sales to members of the association reveals that we have sold 11 alloy masts, 7 booms, 4 sets of rigging, 15 sails, 13 tube bags and 3 sets of battens. For those contemplating an order we have the following stock: Christchurch 1 mast, 1 set of battens, Hamilton: 1 mast and 1 boom, Auckland: 1 cedar hull (#260), 6 sails and tube bags (held at Doyles). **(Note. The alloy masts sell for \$670. An old price was quoted in the last West Wind.)**

The trading activity indicates a healthy growth in the purchase and renovation of hulls that were built 40 odd years ago and with lots of TLC have become the pride of the fleet. According to MS Money the cheque account closing balance at 27 Feb is \$5036.07 and the ASB statement shows \$5033.29. Not bad "eh" for an amateur book keeper. As the trading section grows it involves a greater attention to detail in order to ensure a reasonable return to the association. Despite modern systems of ordering and accounting human errors creep in and add to time and costs. This year, in order to balance administration costs we will need to transfer some \$200-300 from the trading account surplus. There are costs within the ZOA administration that need looking at including a recognition for secretarial work by Rob Ebert and the publi-

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SUBSCRIPTIONS 2002-2003

Subscriptions for 2002-3 are \$15.00 for the NZZOA, and \$10.00 for local associations in Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch. If you are an "orphan" outside these areas, the \$15.00 NZZOA sub can be forwarded to Alex Aitken, President, or Rob Ebert, Secretary. Please include your boat name and number, so we can update the Zephyr Register.

We need your support for all sorts of reasons!